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Child - Oration - Boston, July 4, 1826

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November 26, 1917

AN
ORATION

PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE

REPUBLICANS OF BOSTON,

JULY 4, 1826,

The Fiftieth Anniversary of American Independence.

BY DAVID L. CHILD.

BOSTON:

JOSIAH B. CLOUGH.....CUSTOM-HOUSE STREET.

1826.

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At a Meeting of the Committee of Arrangements, on the morning after the celebration of the natal day of our nation, and the Jubilee of 1826:—

Voted, That A. H. Quincy, Jonathan Simonds, and Ebenezer Clough be a Committee to thank David L. Child, Esq. for his elegant, classical, and Republican Oration, delivered before the Republicans of Boston, at the Rev. Mr. Dean's Meeting-House, on that occasion, and to request of him a copy for the press.

Attest.

E. CLOUGH, Sec'y.

SIR—We, the Committee, designated for the above purpose, in presenting the said Vote, tender you our personal respects.

July 5, 1826.

A. H. QUINCY,
JONATHAN SIMONDS,
EBENEZER CLOUGH.

DAVID L. CHILD, Esq.

GENTLEMEN,

I comply very cheerfully with the request of my Republican fellow citizens, and thank you and them for the kind terms in which it is expressed.

July 5, 1826.

Respectfully,

Your Ob't. Serv't,

D. L. CHILD.

Messrs. A. H. QUINCY,
JONATHAN SIMONDS,
EBENEZER CLOUGH.



*Winslow Lewis Tracts
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ORATION.

IF the goodness of governments were to be estimated by their splendor, we should have little reason to boast of that which our fathers erected, and of which our fathers' fathers laid the deep foundation. But true wisdom has never been more distinguished by the extent of its benefits, than by the simplicity of its means. Our political, like our religious institutions, admit little of the ostentation of festivals and gala days, little of the pomp and circumstance of foreign pageants; we do not wear the variegated robes, the ribbons, stars and garters which shine in the holiday shows of older, and, as some say, wiser nations; we are not attached to their toys, nor dazzled by them. The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty, needs not the aid of foreign ornament; she requires no heavy panoply for defence, nor meretricious finery for allurements. She is so beautiful in herself, and so benign in her benefits; that she wants not, and never shall

want, hands to defend, and hearts to adore her. We will not, however, dispute with our brethren about tastes, if indeed this involve not something graver than a matter of taste; we are willing that they should prefer the forms which they have, to the substances which we offer; but we will combat the assertion, whether made at home or abroad; that our institutions, political and religious, are too simple, too intellectual, and too severe to take a strong and lasting hold on the affections of men. If these institutions preserve in a higher degree than was ever known before, public order and private security; if they afford the most perfect protection to honest industry, if they furnish the strongest incentives to the cultivation of knowledge and virtue: if under their fostering power the meanest men, meanest not in talents and endowments, but in the gifts of fortune, may go forth from the lowest, and raise himself to the highest order of human beings; if he may pass by the only divine right, that of talents and integrity, from the cornfield to the Halls of the Capitol, from the plough to the presidency—if such be the substantial blessings of

these institutions, then we will rejoice on the anniversary of their birth, on the fiftieth return of this hallowed morning; and we will perform, with sincere devotion and rapturous enthusiasm the sublime and grateful solemnities of this august and joyous jubilee. We will break forth in songs and honors to the illustrious founders of our freedom; in hymns and ascriptions to the Almighty and Universal Mind, who inspired them with the wisdom and fortitude to begin, to pursue, and to complete so vast and excellent a work: excellent we call it because we have found it so; because we find ourselves, our friends, and our neighbors enjoying a protection, a tranquillity, a prosperity, and above all opportunities for intellectual improvement and pleasure which we have not seen under other laws, and in other lands. No excisemen infest our towns and cities, no bandits our mountains, no reverend robbers decimate our flocks and our sheaves; no idle and loathsome vagrants, swarm in our streets and public walks, no maimed victims of selfish ambition supplicate in our highways; above all no pampered heartless, mercenary soldiers intrude their

odious presence, and their instruments of terror and of blood into our public assemblies.

I am aware that there are other causes besides our liberal institutions, which may have some influence in producing that happiness for which we rejoice and render thanks to heaven. Undoubtedly there are physical causes, which co-operate more or less, we cannot tell exactly how much with moral ones, to produce that purity of morals and general happiness, which do certainly exist in this country in a higher degree than they ever did elsewhere. Let our enemies call this boasting if they will; we believe it to be true, and we shall hardly relinquish this belief until we hear some better argument against it, than a general and common-place charge of national vanity. We do not, however, fear to bring our blessings to a strict account, and to make fair deductions from them. We are capable of one virtue at least, to which few governments or sovereigns can pretend—an entire willingness to expose ourselves and our system to the freest inquiry and the closest inspection; and if it should prove that we have not elected the best form of government that the pres-

ent state of human affairs will admit, we shall be willing to substitute a better; for we have always this security, and this consolation; that whatsoever that form may be, it must be founded on the general will, and designed for the general good.

It has been said that our country is extensive and our population comparatively small, and therefore it is that we are happier than many other nations, who are differently situated in these respects. This attempt to account for an uncommon prosperity in a manner so little honourable to us, and so far from flattering to our pride, is not without its use; it contains at least an indirect admission of the existence of that prosperity—an admission which it might not be easy to obtain in a direct manner from those, who most frequently and freely discuss the character and prospects of our country. We certainly do not dissent from them as to the fact, nor indeed as to the cause, so far as it may be rationally supposed to operate; but to say that it operates solely or principally to produce this great effect, is somewhat more absurd than to say that it has no operation at all. Taking then the fact, which

we all feel, and which is thus indirectly admitted, to be true; that we are happier than the ignorant, bigoted, dependent, slavish, or seditious races, which people some other countries, we will attempt to give another explanation of it; not denying entirely the agency of natural causes, but at the same time claiming to set down something to the credit of moral ones.

In this land, men must live by their own industry. The greatest merit of our system is that it cooperates with providence to execute the primeval curse, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." No individual among us can arrive at any high degree of respectability and influence, except by his own efforts employed in the acquisition and useful application of knowledge and property. As none of us are nobly born we must acquire our nobility by noble actions. We can have very few among us who do not live independently and by honest industry; ours is the worst country in the world for an idle man; and I believe that it has long been acknowledged to be the best for an industrious one. The Constitution prohibits privileged classes,

and the strongest check is thereby imposed on the multiplication of another class, which is the counterpart to privileged ones—I mean a dependent class. The number of religious teachers too cannot be increased much beyond the wants of the community. Temporary enthusiasm and sectarian zeal may disturb the equilibrium for a time, but in general the number of the clergy like that of the other professions, will be regulated by the only proper measure of supply, namely, the demand for them.

Thus have we excluded at once and we hope forever, those innumerable drones which eat up the honey of the hive—an hereditary nobility, numerous corps of monks, friars, and fox-hunting clergymen; and the hosts of cerfs, retainers, dependants and mendicants, which ever have and ever will form a natural and necessary appendage of those orders. To these circumstances, so propitious to our prosperity, may be added another, not less important than any of them, perhaps as much so as all of them together—the constitutional interdict of standing armies. Our laws contain no provisions for employing and paying

the worse part of the community, to enslave the better part.

If, however, it be to natural, and not to moral causes that we owe our happiness, why is it that other nations in the earliest stages of their existence, have been most degraded, insecure, and wretched; and have grown more respectable, more secure, and more happy, precisely in those periods of their history in which we are destined to deteriorate. Unrol the records of history, that great collection of experiments in political philosophy, and peruse the early annals of every nation of the old and the new world; and then declare whether wild lands alone, however extensive and fertile, afford much security for innocence and happiness. I believe that there will be found no exception to the remark, that where those same causes have existed, to which some would seem to attribute all our happiness; there the people have uniformly been the most rude, vicious, and wretched, and have grown more civilized, more respectable and happy by those very causes which are to demoralize, degrade, and enslave ourselves.

We derived our origin from that nation of Europe, to whose political institutions the learned and the liberal of all countries and languages have united in according a higher degree of praise than to those of any other European people of modern times. We sprung from them too, at a time when the day-spring of learning had shone forth, and shed a cheering light over the face of society; at a time, moreover, of intense thought and earnest inquiry respecting the means of social, as well as eternal happiness; and what is more important than all the rest, those resolute and devoted men who came forth from their countrymen, were intelligent men, moral men, men who had no fear but that of doing wrong, who sought no liberty but that of doing right; and therefore it was that they came here; probably they were "not conscious of the whole importance of the move which they were making in the game of nations—a move which has ever since held kings in check," but they were deeply sensible of the dignity of rational and religious beings, and sturdy contemners of the tyranny from which they fled: whatever they deemed to be their duty, they enter-

ed upon with an ardour, and pursued with an inflexibility which have no parallel in history ; death had no terrors for them, sensual pleasure no allurements ; and if it be true, that Britain, had “got the start of the majestic world” it is no less true that those pious and heroic pilgrims had got the start of Britain herself. Arriving on these shores which was more the commencement than the termination of their toils, they formed, by common councils and the common consent of all, a social compact ; and planted, with infinite labour and danger, the seeds of our political and religious freedom. Might it not be reasonably expected, that men so descended and so separated, would lay the foundation of a system of society, better adapted to general improvement, dignity, and happiness than any which had preceded it ? It appears to me morally certain that they would do so, and that it would involve a gross contradiction and confusion of ideas, to suppose any thing contrary to or less than this.

But this is not all. Not only did our ancestors come from a people, somewhat in advance of the rest of Europe in civilization and the

science of government, and at a time of inquiry and comparative freedom of speech and action, but we, the nation which they founded, have had the advantage of growing up during a period in which arts, science, useful discoveries and inventions have been increased beyond the example, I will not say of any equal time; but of all times of which we have any knowledge: for I do believe that more physical means of increasing human power, and of guarding against human evils have been discovered during the last two or three centuries than in all former ages. We have learnt to admit the light of heaven into our habitations and our temples, while we exclude from them the winter's wind. We do not now creep timidly and laboriously along the indented coast, and haul our bark into its coves and creeks, to pass away the night, but we fearlessly stretch over the dark blue sea, and have startled, with unaccustomed intrusion, the Genii of every ocean; and by the application of a new power, which the untutored savage well enough deems the immediate agency of the Great Spirit, we plough the surface of the deep, be it calm or troubled, with the power and rapidity of the

Leviathan. We have traced the track of the planets and learnt to measure them and their orbits. We have “carried the line and the rule to the utmost verge of creation,” we have penetrated to the solar seat and have kenned the mighty mechanism of the skies. Is it credible that, while we have been making these wonderful discoveries and improvements in physical knowledge, and the physical means of security, and comfort, we have been stationary, or have retrograded in moral, and political knowledge; that while we have let the light of heaven into our houses, we have shut it out of our own minds; and while we have excluded the winter’s cold, a cold selfishness has settled on our hearts. While we have learnt to guide the bark of discovery, of trafic, and of enlightened intercourse over the broad and boisterous ocean, to make the winds our ministers, and by an unheard of power, to defy their fury almost as much on the water as on the land; is it to be credited for a moment that we have made no improvement in the greatest of all arts that of guiding the ship of state; and of sailing on the most important of all voyages, the voyage of life? If we have penetrated the

secrets of the solar world, detected and defined the laws of its complex and harmonious movements, if we—

“ Through vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose *one* universe,”

have we learnt, can we learn, no lessons for regulating, balancing, and harmonizing the powers, central and subordinate, primary and secondary, of a great confederacy? If we have discovered how the vital element courses through the veins, how by cunning skill its superabundance is withdrawn, its deficiencies supplied, and its impurities purged away; have we remained in profound and brutish ignorance of the needful revolutions, the regulating and purifying of political power, which is the blood of the body politic? Does not the elective touch of an intelligent, a virtuous, and vigorous race of men act on political power as the pure air of their native hills does on the breath and the blood of our bodies? If we have discovered an entirely new science, and have found out the art of forming a thousand chemical combinations which were unheard of until within the last fifty years; have we discovered no means of forming new combinations of the

moral elements, equally useful and admirable, neutralizing the poison of one vicious passion by that of another, and converting both into salutary remedies for the diseases of the soul and of the state? Who is here so ignorant as not to know that we have? Who so obstinate as not to acknowledge it? Who so malevolent as not to rejoice at it? If there be any such in this assembly, to him I say, turn your eyes from the causes and observe the marvellous effects.—Observe that group of little children, their decent and amiable demeanor, the admirable order and perfect subordination established among them; with what a reverent affection they regard their teacher, how glad they catch instruction from his lips; how industriously and emulously they apply to the task which he has appointed them. Do you not there behold blossoms which shall produce sound and fair fruit? Is there not in those little ones, hope for parents, for friends, for society, for Heaven? Look too at those youths who patiently turn by day and by night the classic and philosophic pages of Greek and Roman wisdom, and who know no distinction but that of moral and literary excel-

lence. See too those blooming virgins, who frequent the Lyceums of useful learning instead of the corrupting confessionary, and that sturdy yeoman yonder who walks forth the sovereign of the soil which he cultivates; is there no moral beauty and dignity there? Turn next your eyes to the marts of nations; behold the pacific and friendly intercourse of multitudes of different and distant countries; of various dresses and dialects; is a stranger now necessarily an enemy, and is "all contact with him war?"

Extend your observation beyond our own borders. Behold our Franklin carrying the work of humanity which he had commenced among ourselves into distant regions; see him in the very first treaty negotiated for our nation after she had assumed an independent attitude; see him, not by our national influence, for we then had none, but by the influence of reason and justice, procuring the abolition of the droit d'aubaine, the absurd and barbarous law, long the scandal of Europe, by which the goods of a stranger, dying in France, were forfeited to the crown. Hear with what

a mild and persuasive eloquence he pleads the cause of humanity ; and in favor of circumscribing the horrors of slavery and of war : follow the venerable patriarch in his efforts to abolish private war on the water as well as on land ; and see that majestic form of a patriot warrior in whose countenance benevolence and dignity are finely blended ; see him wave his hand in approbation of the philanthropic efforts of the divine old man. Observe still farther the constant endeavours of their successors, to abolish slavery, to promote religious toleration, to prevent outrages on neutral rights, the cause of our late and of so many other wars ; above all, to remove anti-social and retaliating restrictions on the commerce of nations ; and behold the happy success which has crowned and is more and more crowning their efforts. Great Britain, Sweden, the Hanseatic Towns, the Netherlands, the Duke of Oldenburg, Prussia, Sardinia and Russia, have acceded to our wishes, and follow in our footsteps ; and a whole continent of nations have lately burst into being, and are blessed by Providence with the disposition and power to imitate the same wise

and humane policy. When I contemplate these achievements of our government, more glorious than the conquests of armies and the trophies of victory; I cannot but think that if we were to be on this our fiftieth natal day, annihilated—our name and our nation erased from the map of the world, still the memory of what we have done would ever live in the minds of good men, would come up in sweet remembrance before the mercy-seat forever; and we should be celebrated through all coming time as a people, who had done much during a brief existence for the light, the liberty and the peace of the human race.

And now at last in the fulness of time an opportunity has occurred for sealing the great work of beneficence which Franklin and Washington commenced, by establishing in concert with nine neighboring nations, those liberal, just and pacific principles of commerce and international law, which we began forty-nine years ago to urge upon the civilized nations, and as far as self preservation would permit, to reduce to practice ourselves. I know there are some who differ from me in opinion, as to the most proper means of ef-

fecting this object, considering I believe, that separate negotiations with each republic would be preferable to a general and consentaneous arrangement with them all at one time and place; but I cannot conceive that any republican, that any American, unless he be insane, or an enemy to our whole system, can disagree or doubt for one moment as to the propriety of the object. To me it appears the most sublime, the most consoling, the most auspicious spectacle that was ever exhibited on the face of the earth. A vast empire and eight powerful and growing Republics, who, amidst difficulties, of which we can form no just conception, have established justice and tranquillity within their respective borders, are about to meet us for the purpose of consulting and agreeing upon the best means of extending to our intercourse with one another, and with all nations, those equal, just and liberal principles upon which we and they have formed our respective constitutions, and have regulated our own internal affairs. There can be no error, no misunderstanding on this subject. "The design is great, is benevolent, is humane," and I am bold to say, it will affect

the lot of a greater number of human beings, and through all time, than any national movement, political or military, which was ever undertaken. Empires have been enlarged by force and by fraud, nations have been vanquished and reduced to provinces, armies have swept like hurricanes across them; but without effecting the slightest amelioration, even if amelioration were their object, or permanent change of any kind in their laws, education, manners, customs and religion; or in any of those things on which human happiness finally and substantially depends. Rome acquired more true glory by exacting of the Carthaginians the abolition of human sacrifices, as a condition of peace; than by all her victories over them, more high and durable renown by humanizing than by vanquishing her haughty rival. But we are asked not only to deliberate, and to form treaties, but also to instruct and advise in this assembly of nations, and to impart to them the results of our experience. How pleasing, how exalting is the idea! how honorable to us who are thought sufficiently wise and disinterested to give advice; how honorable to those who have the modesty and

the magnanimity to ask it! how readily does it suggest to the mind the most interesting and amiable images of the social relation; youth seeking the counsels of maturer years.

“Thus stands the sturdy elm in ivy bound
Thus youthful ivy clasps the elm around.”

Those instructions in the political systems of Greece, and that copy of the laws of Solon delivered to the Roman Deputation by the Athenian Commonwealth, have conferred lasting honour on both the parties; and did more to extend and perpetuate the real power and glory of Greece, than all the conquests of Alexander. His was the empire of a day, and perished at the same time with its heroic, but foolish founder. Her's has lasted until the present time, and is destined to last through all time; for at this moment the code which the wise and magnanimous Romans built on that corner stone, however it may have been corrupted by Imperial additions, is the guide, more or less, of every civilized nation. Thus, by her legislation, her acts and her letters, that little ATTICA has perpetuated not only her own moral power, and her unfading fame, but it is only through her that we know

of the existence of vast kingdoms and empires which successively rose and fell. It is the Grecian Muses alone, that have rescued almost all of them from blank oblivion! Will any harsh and sour censor, any dissembling enemy of popular governments interrupt these reflections, and with an affectation of severe justice, or of tender sympathy, tell us of the death of Socrates, and of the banishment of Aristides? and with frowning brow, or hypocritical tears adjudge that these excesses have sealed the condemnation of democracy? Such effects of popular effervescence are certainly lamentable, and the story of Socrates, told by his eloquent pupil, will ever send the hearers weeping to their beds. But if the Athenians killed Socrates, it is equally true that they were the only people which could produce him. Stately trees and good fruit grow in a good soil; so do great and exalted men. Such men as Socrates, Plato, and Cicero are produced by long throes, by a moral germination of centuries in the womb of a great, a free, and an intellectual people; and the honour of producing is certainly not less—in my opinion it is much greater, than

the dishonour of banishing or destroying them; because one is the effect of temporary excitement, the other of an habitual and prevailing inclination to wisdom and virtue. Besides, why do not these stern censors (whom, if we could know the whole truth, we should find, not to love justice more, but Republicanism less)—why do they never tell us of the death of Seneca, and of the many parricides, fratricides, aye, and regicides too, committed by kings legitimate and usurping, to obtain power, or to keep it? But did not the Athenians repent of their rashness, and as far as they could, repair the wrong by decreeing honours to the memory of Socrates, and gifts to his children? And what tyrant was ever known to pay homage to the merits of a good man when dead, whom, living, he had persecuted unto death? No one; their resentments are not so generous, so manly, so placable. After all the errors of those ancient republicans, many of the sources of which we think we have avoided by a better balance of our constitutions; after mustering all their faults and follies, setting them in a note book, learning and conning them by rote; still there

remains one thing to be said, which is a sufficient reply to them all—those ancient republics did after all produce MEN. Do you tell us that their experiment failed; and that ours will fail too? I deny that theirs did fail; and if it did, it would not follow that ours also would fail; for among our innumerable vanities, we have that of believing that we have discovered and remedied the principal defects of their system; and that it is not logical to conclude from them to us. But even if it were otherwise; I, for one, would be content to take their chance, and share their lot. I had rather have the recollections and the records of glorious Greece and majestic Rome, than all human literature and human records besides; except that remnant of our own, saved from the fires which the vandal Cockburn kindled.

I deny that the experiment failed! was that system a failure which filled up so many centuries with light and glory; a light and glory, which, though obscured for a time by barbarism and feudalism, did afterwards renew their rays, and still shine with an extinguishable lustre? Was that system a failure which has given us so many great men,

to contemplate, so many admirable writings to read? On what characters does the mind, ever seeking for truth and moral beauty, repose with so much satisfaction, as on those of the exalted men who rose and ruled by the only divine right, that of talents and integrity, in those old republics. What mortals fill up so well the immortal mind as those wise, heroic and noble republicans? Yet we are told that the experiment failed! If this be failure, God grant that we may have more failures. Greece and Rome have given us men for whom we ought to be grateful to them, intellectual statues, which we can contemplate with souls filled with sublime and ennobling emotions; models for character as well as for sculpture; moral and intellectual portraits, exhibited in the gallery of Plutarch. What man of understanding, courage and honor, does not turn with satisfaction from the little, selfish, sycophantic and deceitful race, who usually surround the thrones of princes, (usually, I say, because I know that there are some good men every where,)—who sigh for ribbons, who are pleased with a rattle, who are bribed with bawbles to betray their brethren and to betray

themselves—what man or woman of sense does not gladly turn from such an humbling spectacle, to contemplate in throbbing and speechless admiration, the profound thought, the serene elevation, the frank demeanor, the unaffected gravity, the stern integrity, the deep determination, and the inflexible decision of the old Greek and Roman character; that character acted so well by the three hundred at Thermopylæ, and by the Roman Senate on the approach of the Gauls; that character which none but their own poets, none but those who saw them could adequately describe;

Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinæ.

Dr. Johnson the pensioned advocate of passive submission, the ministerial pamphleteer of the American revolution; derives one of his best titles to respect and admiration from a temporary exhibition on one occasion, of that inflexible firmness and proud independence of character, which belong peculiarly to republicans. We admire him for his indignant, yet decorous reply to Lord Chesterfield; for his Romanlike contempt of title and wealth, coupled with meanness and hypocrisy; and

it may be safely asserted, that Chesterfield with all his wit, his learning, and his eloquence ; all the triumphs of the drawing-room and the honours of the peerage, has left no action; nay, that all his actions together, his accomplishments, his speeches, his sayings and his polished letters; all, all do not occupy so large a space in the memory and admiration of men, as that single republican letter, in which the lexicographer repels the cold and selfish patronage of the peer. Where his own feelings and dignity were concerned Johnson could assume the port and bearing of a Roman ; but when there was nothing at stake but the dignity and prosperity of these distant colonies, who, he said, "did not know how to read," he shrunk again into the obsequious courtier, bribed by an exchequer warrant, and excited to childish glee, by a word and a smile from majesty.

It is impossible to think of Roman dignity and a Roman senate without thinking of another senate, nearer to us in time and place ; and of the deep humiliation, which one or two individuals have brought upon it, and upon us. We have read in fable, not in history, of a log, which was ruler over the frogs, and of a serpent which

succeeded him; both were supposed to be unfit for the exercise of power but of irreconcilable natures, and the moral of the fable turns on that idea: we have recently seen (I wish it were still fable instead of history)—we have lately seen those two natures united in one individual, who is a serpent to some and a log to others; who unites the vices of both characters, and to the honor of our country and of human nature, receives, I believe, a double retribution, the reprobation of one party as a serpent, and the contempt of the others as a log; what a fall was there! I would that there were an opportunity of showing the same unanimity in dismissing from office, a highly selfish and unfaithful servant, as was manifested in an evil hour in placing him in it.

But we will not despair of the Republic, nor of that body, whose brightness is not extinguished but only obscured. The privileges of its floor may be prostituted to the lowest and basest purposes; the peaceful and unoffending citizen may be wantonly and personally abused in a place and by an individual where and to whom the rights and feelings of American citizens should be especially sacred; the

worst motives may be licentiously ascribed to the best actions ; designs dark as Erebus, may be boldly and without a shadow of proof, attributed to him whose station demands at least a constitutional respect ; all the spirit of the Constitution, all the maxims of republicanism, all the rules of decorum may be violated; the most precious of the peoples' rights, the right of suffrage, treated with derision; nay, this malignant spirit may find gratification in rending the veil, which conceals the delicate and honourable female; he may pursue to the grave reverend and tottering old age, and then retire across the water to the home of aristocracy, to receive its gratulations, and to repose awhile in order to return to a fresh attack upon us and our institutions. But such irregularities (such atrocities would be the truer name)—cannot long continue. There is a sense of decorum among us, a feeling of self respect, an attachment to Republican institutions, a vigilance and activity to guard against their enemies ; and I do believe there can be no greater enemy of them and of us, than he who perverts the dignities and the privileges which they confer, to the purposes of un-

measured and malignant slander. He who does so, and does so with impunity, may well tell us that our experiment will fail; he must wish it to fail, and wish to do all in his power to cause its failure. But though we contemplate his unrestrained scurrility, (which, when his passions are excited, ought to be regarded as praise, and his praises as reproach;)—though we contemplate it with deep shame and disgust, we ought not on that account to indulge a feeling of anxiety or concern. When Sheridan failed or succeeded indifferently in his first attempt to speak in Parliament, and was candidly told so; he rested his head on his hand for a few minutes, and then vehemently exclaimed “It is in me, and by Heaven it shall come out.” Thus I say of the Republic, there is virtue and dignity in her, and by Heaven they shall come out!

It must be that offences will come. Some men will be highly selfish, treacherous, dishonest; we cannot be absolutely sure of any man until, as the poet saith, he be dead. One man is intrusted with power over the persons of men, which he abuses, it may be, for the purposes of malice and revenge; he takes the

power of life and death into rash hands, and cuts off his fellow beings with a studied mockery of the forms of law. Another in a high station takes upon himself to inflict arbitrary and degrading punishment upon his fellow citizens, and heeds not the exclamation, I am an American citizen, any more than the cruel and lawless Verres, damned by Cicero to everlasting fame. Another defrauds the sailor and the soldier of their scanty meed ; another withholds from the fallen children of the forest, the wretched exchange for their woods and their wigwams ; another rises to bloated opulence on the peculations of office, and buys out our independent farmers with their own money ! But mark the end of that man, mark his whole life ; he will be as much pointed at by the finger of scorn as if felony were branded on his forehead. He will be detested and shunned by the good, and distrusted even by the bad. He may escape the animadversions of the law, as a decayed limb will sometimes escape the pruninghook ; but will he escape the frowns, the reproaches, and the sneers of his neighbors ? No ; the memory of his malversations will meet him every where ; in the city, in

the country, in the drawing room, in the corners of the streets ; his very wealth, for which he has bartered his reputation and peace, will constantly reproach him, and infuse poison into the gilded cup which it buys. Praised be that God who gave men consciences...Hosanna to his holy name ! The traitor may escape the punishment of the law ; but can he escape from himself ? He may roll in ill-gotten wealth, he may glitter in all the titles and decorations which royal hands can heap upon him ; but will these bawbles, will any earthly thing compensate him for a single pang ; such as was felt when the footboy in the street, as he pointed out a passenger to his playmate, said, in a voice repressed indeed, yet audible to guilty ears, "that is Arnold, the Traitor." Still worse ; should some horrible word which haunts him like an evil spirit, be uttered in a sermon or an epigram, he imagines it to be meant for himself ; for it is not the least part of the punishment which the insatiable resentments of an offended conscience inflict, that a guilty person always presumes, until the contrary be proved, that every one knows his guilt, and is

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his enemy. I see in all this the traces of Eternal Wisdom; these are wise and sagacious provisions for the security of good, and the punishment of bad men; which prove better than all the subtilties of the schools, or the ravings of enthusiasts, the existence and power of a transcendent Being, whom we call God.

But it would be irreverent to him and unjust to our species, to dwell exclusively or too long on this picture; turn we then to another; my soul loses half of its oppression, and I seem to breathe a purer air. Behold the true patriot, and inflexible friend of his country and her freedom. He first lays the foundation of public confidence by correct private conduct; for public usefulness by the acquisition of good learning, and by contemplating the characters of the wise and heroic men, who have given their immortal examples to us and to the world. Possessed of knowledge and public confidence, he does not fly to the succor of his country when she stands in no need of succor; he does not bluster in newspapers, nor harangue in halls, about dangers which do not exist; and proclaim his willingness to make

sacrifices, which he knows will never be called for. Rely upon it, that he who does these things will make no sacrifice, except that of his own conscience.

The real patriot, the true republican, labors diligently in his vocation. He acquires knowledge, competency and weight of character, all of which, and life with them, he is ever ready, if need be, to bring to the service of his beloved country. He will serve her first and principally for the honor of her service. He will not wedge in with a worthless crowd at the seat of government, and make the chief magistrate weary of his place, by asking importunately what he cannot conscientiously grant. For when a dishonest or incapable man obtains a place of trust and honor, a gross injustice is done to some better and more modest man, whom it is the most delightful prerogative of a chief magistrate, to seek out, and to confer upon him spontaneously that honor which he cannot solicit importunately without ceasing to merit it. A still greater and more serious injustice is done to the nation, which can be, and ought to be served by the best men. In the old statutes

of England there are some enactments against office-hunters, but though there be much reason in them, they could never be executed. They are laws which should exist in the hearts and habits of a people and its government, rather than in its statute books. The reason of them is, that importunate and pressing solicitations, whether made by oneself or one's friends, consume the time of rulers, and add to their unavoidable embarrassments; and what is worst of all, disturb that pure stream of justice which ought ever to flow fast by the seat of power. You will forgive me for mentioning our reproaches as well as our praises; nay, I deem it my duty to do so, and I think that republicans can never be offended with any one for endeavouring to do his duty. Shall we on these occasions, consecrated as much to the preservation as to the celebration of our freedom—shall we shut our eyes to every evil and defect, and admit no feeling but one of thoughtless exultation; that would be unworthy of rational beings, of beings capable of reflection and forecast, and would augur ill for the permanency of our happiness. But I wander from my purpose, which was to impress upon the

minds of my fellow citizens the idea, perhaps it is only an idea, yet it is a consoling, a cheering an elevating one, of the perfect republican; of one who seeks to be rather than to seem worthy, who aims to be popular by deserving to be so; who prefers public gratitude to public money while living, and cares for no monument but one of orphans tears wept over him when dead. This is the true patriot, and perfect republican, this the real Cincinnatus. Fortunately we can boast of such men; such was the illustrious—no, that is vulgar praise—such was the virtuous Washington. Clothed with almost unlimited military power, he surpassed all men in his respect for the civil authorities, for the majesty and the minutest forms of the laws; and dying he bequeathed to us this counsel; keep your officers strictly to the forms, for that is the surest way to preserve the substance of the laws. Surrounded by numerous and importunate personal adherents, who imagined that they should be billeted for life on the nation; he set them resolutely aside, and chose strangers, or men whom he personally disliked, to fill important public trusts. He is one of

those men on whose character the mind may repose with complete satisfaction.

Finally, fellow-citizens, what view of human affairs can present stronger inducements to virtue, or offer more precious rewards to true honor, courage and patriotism than that which we have now taken? You who have talent and industry, and desire to gain an honest fame; pursue the even tenor of your way, and your talents and virtues shall not want a theatre on which they may shine with a just splendor. You, who are ambitious of public employments, first obtain for yourselves private confidence. You, whose chivalrous souls aspire to deeds of martial fame, remember that the greatest of all victories is that over your own passions; and the highest command, the command of yourselves. You will not have the spirit, which becomes republican soldiers, the spirit which our constitution inculcates; if you do not always as earnestly hope that your country may never need your services, as you will cheerfully render them should they unhappily be called for. You, who suffer under the abuse of power, submit patiently, until by your merits you

have acquired that just influence, which will enable you to correct the evil conformably to law ; but beware, lest by premature and un-availing efforts, you not only sacrifice yourselves, but also give new confidence and security to wicked and tyrannical men.

And let us all remember, that we are acting not merely for ourselves, but for the oppressed of all nations ; who are looking to us for an example of wisdom and virtue, which may be to them a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night to guide and cheer them onward. Are we not at this moment the mark and model for all the world ? Do not greyheaded statesmen, learned writers and eloquent orators, constantly point for proof and illustration to these United States ? When patriots strive to ameliorate the condition of their country, they have a living and glorious argument to sanction their efforts in the prosperity, security and happiness of these States ; and they lay the spectres which start up at every step of their progress, chattering about "innovation" by presenting to them the constitution of these States. If told that governments cannot exist without an established

church with its corruptions, and rapacity—they appeal to these States. If told that it is dangerous for a people to read and write, and own a Bible—they appeal to these States. If told that a nation must have a standing army, and pensioned squadrons of yeomanry cavalry to trample on the people and on the laws—they appeal to these States ; and it rests with us to determine, whether or not they shall appeal in vain.



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